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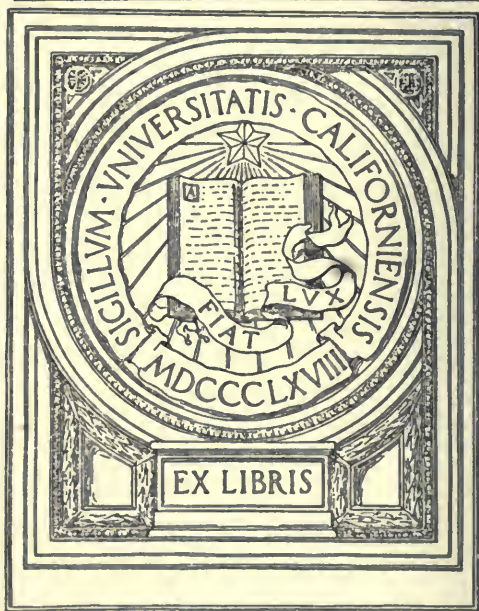
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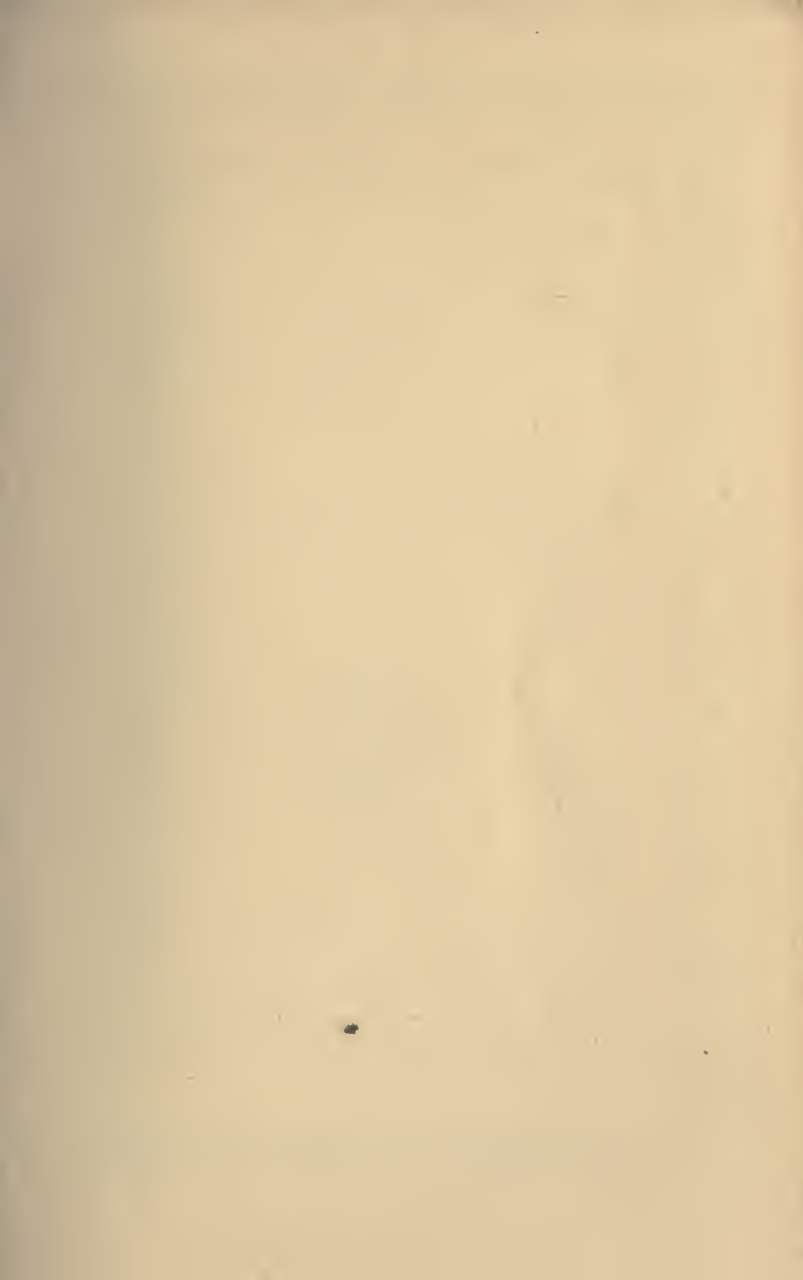


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Riverside Educational Monographs

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THE EVOLUTION OF A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

BY

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

It is probable that at the close of the great emergency in which we now find ourselves this nation will undergo a notable reappraisal and a considerable reconstruction. A nation seldom makes large sacrifices for the maintenance of its ideals without becoming sensitive to practices which fall far short of them. Already we are deeply concerned to know just what qualities of personal character and precisely what kinds of human relationships are fundamental to the realization of a truly democratic life. We are asking whether or not we possess these in adequate degree, and how we are to overcome our discrepancies.

The American cannot long ask himself these questions without ultimately looking to the public school system for ways and means of rebuilding our national character and life. From the time of Thomas Jefferson it has been the habit of our national leaders to reassert the acute dependence of free government and free society upon

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the organized system of popular education. Generally speaking, the people as a whole have accepted the doctrine that our schools are the most effective instruments we have for the conscious direction of our national life. It remains for the teachers to put this faith into practice more responsively and more scientifically than ever before.

The professional problem is one of more direct and effective social adjustment of school organization and teaching process to the ideals and conditions of our aspiring but somewhat chaotic American life. The philosophy of democracy needs an enlarged and more thoughtful use among school teachers. The traditional and the imitative tendencies of the teaching personnel must be supplemented by a newly acquired devotion to the checking of results. Long has an easy faith in our deductions of expected efficiency concealed our incompetencies in the achievement of both immediate pedagogical results and final social products. Some progress we have made, but it is quite inadequate to meet just criticisms which at the end of this war will

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fall heavily upon the American school system. The educators must at once begin to prepare their minds for that new effective democratic service which the public will soon insistently require of them.

The first step is to know whither our present school system is taking us. What we have is the product of much indiscriminate borrowing from alien nations coupled with partial modifications forced on us by imperious influences native to our own life. But even these characteristically American influences have entered our school system in an isolated rather than a coördinated way. They operate in the presence of strange inconsistencies. Many factors in our national life which have a wide but subtle importance in our social scheme have failed to register upon our educational organization because public clamor has never imposed them upon professional attention.

The second step is to encourage an educational initiative and experimentation which will give to our American school teaching a more direct adaptiveness to our national social life. Amongst us, educational reform has operated with an air

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of cock-sureness. If a new device could not promise perfection, it has not had strong proponents. This has been fatal to that openness of mind which gives experiment the large initial breadth which increases its chance of success. Vanity, both personal and professional, has attached to the origination of new plans of procedure and prevented the correction of errors in first thought. Moreover, we have been wasteful in our neglect of educational experience elsewhere than on our own trying ground. Our need is for more frank experimentation in education, one that is sensitive to the judgments of a comparative study of experience the world over.

The way to such a point of view and method is admirably suggested by the brilliant study of American education here presented. Its whole analysis is scientific in spirit and timely in method of statement. It ushers in the beginning of that new educational literature which the present large thoughtfulness of the profession must provide if American schools are to meet the huge American problems already staring us in the face.

PREFACE

THE changes which have been going on in recent years in the organization of American schools are not mere superficial readjustments dictated by the whims of communities or individual leaders. There are, to be sure, minor reforms and counter-reforms which are purely local or transient in character. But back of these there are fundamental tendencies toward change which aim at the adaptation of schools to community needs. The feeling has been steadily gaining strength that our generation must shake off the institutional traditions of a past age and organize a sound scheme of democratic education. The present study is an effort to bring out explicitly some of the justifications for the reorganizations which are now under way. The book aims to bring to clearer consciousness the unique characteristics of our continuous educational system. It aims to point the way by which much of the present waste of pupils' time and energy can be

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corrected. It is a plea for a tolerant attitude toward the crudities of the junior high school. It is a plea for more coöperation in developing this institution.

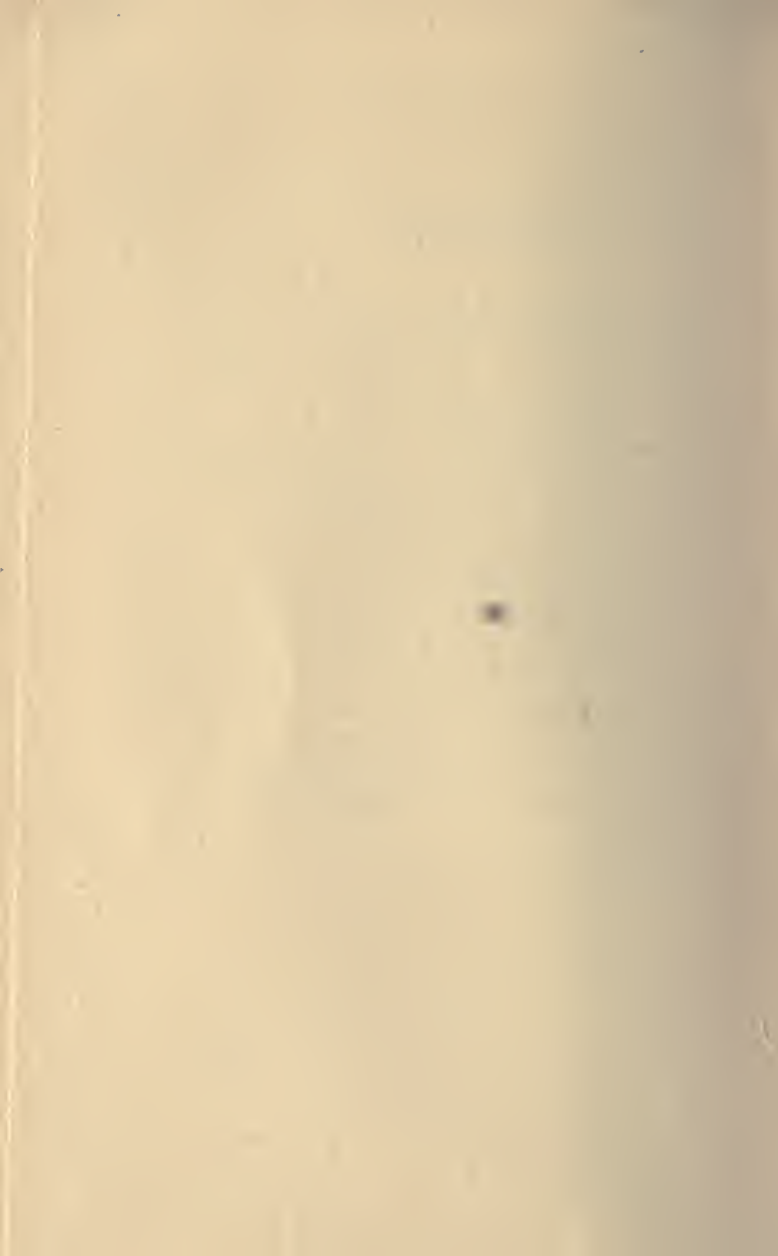
The book limits itself to a discussion of the common school and to the facts regarding the high school which are directly related to the common school. The problem of high-school reorganization and the problem of a better articulation of high school and college are touched on, but not discussed in full. The reader will, however, be able without serious recasting of phrases to carry over all that is here set forth into the fields which lie outside the sphere of the present volume.

C. H. J.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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THE EVOLUTION OF A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

I

INTRODUCTION

THE common school is sometimes described as a product of the Reformation. Before that period there was no thought of special training for ordinary boys and girls. The humble tasks of their daily lives called for no knowledge of the arts of reading and writing, and such skill as they required for practical occupations was acquired by imitation. There was no demand, even in the upper levels of society, for the education of girls. The duties of girls were domestic, and propriety forbade their training outside the home. It was only the sons of the aristocracy who were thought of as needing schooling. For them there were developed, from the twelfth century on, schools of law and theology and places of training in the arts of war and the hunt. Education

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began as an exclusive right of the sons of the aristocracy.

By the time the Puritans came to New England matters had progressed. The common man had reached a level where he had a right to schooling. But the traditions of aristocracy were still strong even in New England. The clergyman and others of the professional class were men apart, and the schools which prepared them for their life-work were exclusive institutions. Even as late as Revolutionary times a democratic system of education had not been worked out.

Then came the period of rapid growth of republican ideas when the Nation framed its Constitution and set up its machinery of popular government. Still there lingered in the schools traditions of aristocratic exclusiveness in the form of separate schools for the professional classes; and for a long time these traditions could not be set aside in the interests of democratic schools.

The prospects of advance toward a strictly democratic educational system were bright as a result of the growth, in the early years of the

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nineteenth century, of the American academy and of the district school. But in the midst of this advance, in the middle of the last century our leaders carried us back toward medievalism by borrowing from the least democratic nation in Europe one of its fundamental institutions. They brought to America the Prussian common school. The eight-year elementary school of the United States is a transplanted institution. It does not belong to us, and it is not in harmony with our evolution. It has acted as an obstacle to the growth of a unified school system.

For more than half a century we have tried to expand it and thus to make it democratic. But during all this time we have not succeeded in radically altering its form. Of late we have begun to understand that what is needed is thoroughgoing reform, not compromise. During the last decade many cities have adopted a form of organization known as the six-and-six plan. This abandons the eight-year elementary school with its Prussian course of study for an organization which is at once more economical and broader in the outlook which it offers to its pupils. The

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experiment has been somewhat chaotic and many observers have been pessimistic. Some are in doubt about the wisdom of the experiment even to-day. But progress is under way and this progress is toward a school system which will eliminate the Prussian eight-year common school.

In the midst of the hesitating experimentation of recent years have come the present awakening of a national consciousness and a new devotion to democracy stimulated by the revelations of the goal toward which Prussian education leads. The contribution which the schoolman can make to the new era is clear. He must bring about speedily those changes which have been waiting for slow evolution. He must study the new conditions of life, and create an educational system which shall be no imitation of an old aristocratic model, but a true expression of the spirit of a free democracy.

To this end it is fitting that the distinction between an aristocratic school system and a democratic school system be carefully drawn. It is fitting that the history of American schools be sketched so as to show where these schools have

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made achievements and where they have failed. With this contrast and with these facts in mind it will be legitimate to suggest the steps which must be taken to complete the reforms which have been moving but slowly in the past.

II

UNDEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS

AMERICANS have long been accustomed to hearing the public school lauded as the foundation of democracy. It is not unnatural that they should fall into the mistaken belief that any scheme of universal education is of necessity democratic. The example of Germany completely refutes this belief. The educational system of that country is and has been for generations a wall of defense to aristocracy and a device for disciplining the common people into willing subservience to this aristocracy. An examination of some of the leading characteristics of the German schools will serve two purposes. It will furnish a contrasting background for a later discussion of the democratic tendencies in our own system and will at the same time show how gross a blunder was made in the middle of the last century when one branch of the German system was imported into the United States.

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The German school system is made up of two separate compartments. One is for the common people and is called the *Volksschule*. The other is for the aristocracy. The latter is subdivided into several institutions which differ slightly from each other, but for our purposes may very properly be typified by the *Gymnasium* which is the oldest and still dominant form of aristocratic school.

There are minor deviations from the types of organization which we shall discuss. The smaller German States have *Volksschulen* and *Gymnasien*, which in their primary departments are not as completely separated as are the schools of the great States where there is absolute separation from the first year to the last. In some German States there are certain so-called middle schools which stand between the two extreme types. In all the States schools for girls have grown up in recent years which are somewhat divergent from the historic patterns planned originally for boys. But when all these minor and local differences are taken into account, the one clear outstanding fact is that the German schools fall into two sharply distinguished systems.

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The *Volksschule* and the *Gymnasium* are altogether different in their methods of training teachers. The teachers of the *Volksschule* are graduates of that school who have afterwards been trained in an institution known as a *Lehrerseminar*. This institution has no connection with the university. Before the war, teachers of the *Volksschule* were allowed to take courses in the university only in the one State of Saxony, and the university privileges there reluctantly granted were so hedged about that the concession was practically without value. Even in Saxony the teacher in training for the common school had absolutely no access to the university. In no other State were even experienced common-school teachers allowed to study in the higher institutions of learning.

The teachers of the *Gymnasium*, on the other hand, have entirely different training. No *Volksschule* graduate ever becomes a teacher in the *Gymnasium*. No *Gymnasium* teacher has ever been in a *Lehrerseminar*. The teachers in the *Gymnasium* are products of the higher schools. They are first of all graduates of the *Gymnasium*

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itself. They then take courses in the university. After completing courses in the university the prospective teacher of the *Gymnasium* takes an examination set by the State, and if successful goes to a *Gymnasium* for a period of apprentice training. Here he is drilled for two years in the ways of the teaching staff and, under the closest supervision of the principal and teachers, absorbs the ways of thinking and acting which will fit him to perpetuate the traditions of a school devoted to the educating of a highly selected aristocratic class.

The sharp distinction between the methods of training teachers in the two schools of the German system is of importance to us in this country, because in 1838 Massachusetts, through the enactment of the Normal School Law, established the first American training school for teachers of the common schools on the model of the Prussian *Lehrerseminar*. The American normal school was in no way related to the college; nor was it a part of the original purpose of this school to train teachers for the high school. The normal schools were institutions apart, sep-

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arate from all other schools except the common elementary schools. Trouble has again and again arisen from this fact. Our normal schools have always been difficult to coördinate with other educational institutions. We have to-day in many States acute controversies between state universities and normal schools because in a unified American system it is difficult to maintain the German separation. We shall some day have to face this problem and solve it. It is one of the misfortunes which came to us when we were young and unorganized and over-impressed with the apparent efficiency of a system that was well organized.

Coming back from the digression, we note that the German schools are entirely separate, not only in their teachers, but also in the classes of pupils for which they are designed. It is not true there as here that all classes of pupils attend one elementary school in the early years and gradually fall apart later. From the first there is separation. At six years of age the boy or girl of the common family goes to the *Volksschule*. The child knows from the day he enters that

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school that his place in the economy of national life is fixed at a low level. He is to belong to the humbler class. His tasks are those of bearing the heavy burdens. He can never be one of society's leaders. The six-year-old boy of the aristocratic family goes to another institution. He, too, notes the social distinction and is proud of the future which lies before the members of his class. If he can maintain his place in this school, all the opportunities of rank are open to him.

Let us follow these two classes of pupils as they move through the schools. The child in the *Volksschule* receives eight years of education. This is given him out of the public purse. When the eight years are over he is confirmed in the Church and his education is in most cases completed. A few go on to the *Lehrerseminar*. The rest attend industrial schools which fit for the trades, but no boy or girl of this school can ever receive a higher education. There is no high school, no university, no intellectual opening for the graduates of the *Volksschule*. They are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. The products of the *Volksschule* go into the in-

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dustries. They may not be officers in the army. They are not admitted to the civil-service positions which require intelligence. They are held by the firm hand of the State in the social caste to which they belong. They are drafted into army service for two years, or in some divisions for three, as common soldiers; and they are taken to some part of the Empire remote from home in order that they may not be distracted during the period of their introduction to the art of soldiering.

The student of the *Gymnasium* is of a very different rank and has a very different experience. In the school which he attends all the pupils pay tuition. They have before them twelve years of schooling, three in the primary department and nine in the *Gymnasium* proper. After graduation from the *Gymnasium* there open up the university and the higher technical schools. Beyond these are the professions and all the higher Government positions. Those who complete successfully the third year from the last in the *Gymnasium* serve only one year in the army and are allowed to choose the place

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where they will serve. It is from this class, too, that the officers of the army are drawn.

So intense is the social pressure on a boy to maintain himself in this school that many of the difficulties which are common in keeping up standards among American high-school pupils are unknown. The word of a teacher in a *Gymnasium* is heeded as if it were the dictum of society, because it is true in a very literal sense that the boy and the teacher are dealing with the social career of the boy and with no trivial problem of mere education.

A most important phase of the separation between the *Volksschule* and the *Gymnasium* appears when we come to consider the subject-matter of instruction. The *Gymnasium* teaches Latin and French and English. It teaches algebra and geometry and science. Nor are these subjects postponed to the later years. At the end of the fourth year of schooling the boy begins his Latin and by the time he is through the twelfth year he can read Latin understandingly. The higher branches of mathematics are studied from the sixth school year on.

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The pupil in the *Volksschule* has a very different program. He is to be all his life one of the common people. He does not need foreign languages, and he gets none. He will need no higher mathematics in his lowly sphere, so he is taught only the rudiments of mathematics which deal with number work and simple measurement. In short, the *Volksschule* is a vernacular, rudimentary school limited to eight years.

There are two subjects which are taught in both schools, namely, history and religion. The history is chiefly German history. In the common school it is emphatically German history. In the *Gymnasium* it is German history with some Greek and Roman history and a little modern history of other nations.

Religion is taught throughout all schools. It is used as an effective means of teaching duty to the State and recognition of authority. Some of the references to the Deity which are made by the Kaiser and which fall on American ears with a strange and unintelligible sound can be understood when we remember that these references call up the associations drilled into the

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minds of German boys and girls by constant instruction in German religion. Religion is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class to keep the people obedient. We in this country may scoff at the divine right of kings, but it is persistently kept before the children of the German Empire, and they can no more shake themselves free from the doctrine than we can escape the conviction that a verb and its subject should agree in number.

History and religion are taught in all schools, but the views which the pupils get in the two schools are as different as the views of a landscape seen now through the small end of a telescope, now through the large end. To the pupil of the *Volksschule* the voices of religion and history call to service and obedience. To the boy in the *Gymnasium* the call is to dominion and arrogant command.

When one studies the German school system with a mind full of American traditions, one finds himself wondering how it comes about that people submit to this kind of separation. The answer to this wonder is to be found in his-

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tory. The German school system is a direct descendant of the first educational system of Europe.

When the first schools grew up in Europe they were professional schools for the better classes. The common man did not read or write. A few of the nobility and the princes did. The clergy had a monopoly on the intellectual life of the nations except in so far as the rulers shared the things of the mind in moments of leisure when they were not waging war. So it came about that there were riding-schools for knights and schools of law for the nobility and schools of theology for the clergy, but the day of common schools was not yet. These early schools for the upper classes had in them no tolerance for democracy. The more the aristocracy could divide itself from the common people by training and by cultivation of the intellectual arts, the more it made itself secure in its rule. The modern German *Gymnasium* has exactly the same spirit as had the aristocratic schools of the medieval period. The *Gymnasium* is a device for buttressing a powerful aristocracy in its exclusive control of power

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through superior mastery of knowledge. The common herd has been deliberately held at a lower intellectual level in order that its members may accept without uprising a lower social standing and a more arduous service to the State.

When common schools began they were mission schools organized in the cathedrals to train choir boys and teach the people the catechism. Some charitable priest or monk would at times go beyond his formal duty and give the boys, as a reward for their contributions to the church service, an insight into the rudiments of arithmetic or some training in recognizing letters. The chief business of this mission school was, however, not to raise the boy up, but rather to drill him in service and obedience. So it is with the *Volksschule* of to-day. It is a school adapted to those who are to serve and are to be trained to be content with their lot.

The situation to-day is the same as in the days of the early mission schools. The German common school is the home of humility and pious acceptance of authority. Its training is free, given by a paternalistic State. The *Gymnasium*

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is the stronghold of an established aristocracy. Before the war ninety-two per cent of the children of Germany were in the common school. Eight per cent were in preparation for the privileges of aristocracy. The spirit of it all is expressed in a remark made to the writer by a German university professor in 1913 in the city of Leipzig. The discussion had been on American high schools and the 1,200,000 students then in these schools. "Such a number of students in German higher schools," said the professor of pedagogy, "would be the gravest kind of a social menace."

III

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

THE early settlers in New England were democratic in their educational ideals, at least to the point of demanding that every one should have some kind of training. They were all members of the same social class in theory if not in final practice. But the traditions of the Old World and the natural tendencies toward specialization were strong in determining the form of organization which the schools even of that democratic community took on. There soon arose, on the one hand, a higher professional school with its special preparatory schools not unlike the aristocratic schools of Europe, and on the other hand, a lower common school which gave to the ordinary boy and girl some training in matters of religion and in the art of reading necessary for a first-hand acquaintance with the Scriptures. The common school was in form much like its

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European predecessors. The higher professional school was not a part of the popular educational system. The subject-matter of instruction in the higher school was determined by special vocational demands. The lower school had its wholly non-professional task to perform and accordingly used non-professional material in its teaching.

The statement can be made concrete by quoting descriptions of the two kinds of institutions which appeared in the earliest years of New England history. The first of the higher institutions was Harvard College, founded by an act of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay in October, 1636. The early charters of Harvard set forth the general purpose of the institution as that of taking all necessary provisions "that may conduce to the education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and godliness." This general purpose was, however, in reality subordinate to a special purpose. As an investigator of the occupations of the early graduates of Harvard has put the matter in a monograph issued by the Bureau of Education:—

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A better idea of the motives of the founders than is discernible from the charter may be gained from a quotation from *New England's First Fruits*, published in 1643, the year after the first class graduated:—

“One of the next things we longed for, and looked after, was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust. And as we were thinking and consulting how to effect this great work, it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard (a godly gentleman and a lover of learning, then living amongst us) to give the one half of his estate toward the erecting of a college, and all his library.”

From this it is apparent that those who founded the institution primarily had in mind a theological seminary. The professions of the graduates for the early period bear witness to the fact that this was practically what the institution was. The ministry was the one profession most necessary, most demanded by the society of that time, and this profession more than any other required an advanced education. It is not surprising, therefore, to find this profession dominant during the early years of Harvard's history. This dominance continues for over a century, and not until the period immediately following the Revolutionary War does any other

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profession claim so many of the graduates as the ministry.¹

The same kind of a statement can be made for Yale and the other early schools of higher learning. Furthermore, the preparatory schools which grew up around the colleges were controlled in the organization of their courses of study by the professional character of the college courses. It thus came to pass that in democratic New England there appeared a group of institutions which, in form of organization and in content of the course of study, were very like the aristocratic schools of Europe. Indeed, the Old-World models were closely and consciously followed in these schools. In the effort to provide preachers for their congregations the Puritans accepted a kind of class distinction which made the member of the professional class higher than the common citizen.

The common schools of that day, like the first common schools of every nation, were organized

¹ Bailey B. Burritt, *Professional Distribution of College and University Graduates*, p. 15. United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1912, no. 19.

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to give religious training to the ordinary boy and girl who had no thought of entering a profession and no thought of social exclusiveness. These schools were provided for very early in colonial history. One of the clearest statements of the purpose of the early colonial school is to be found in the Connecticut statute of 1650 which may be quoted as follows: —

It being one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from a knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times, keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times, by persuading them from the use of tongues, so that, at least, the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers; and that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers [the court decreed that whenever a township increased to fifty householders they should employ some one] to teach all such children as shall resort to him, to write and read.

As the centers of religious instruction provided for in this and like statutes grew up in the various settlements, they tended naturally to expand the scope of their interests. The school-master became a teacher, not merely of the

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Scriptures, but also of the simple rules of arithmetic and of penmanship. Later he introduced geography and history. The expansion of the common school was in the direction of general information, not toward the learned professions.

With the higher professional schools, on the one hand, and the common school, on the other, New England had all the possibilities of a dual school system. But such was not the system which developed. Let us consider some of the reasons why the dual system was impossible. In the first place, there was no aristocracy to seize on the schools as a means of perpetuating its power. The exclusive professional class was not hereditary as it was in Europe. It could be entered by any boy who would prepare himself to enter the clergy. In the second place, the religion which was accepted and practiced by all was a common code of personal responsibilities and in this code one man was like every other. Religion tended in New England to make men obedient to God, but not to one another. The common participation in the church service made it impossible for the professional aristocracy to

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keep aloof from the common people. Thus it came about that the only exclusive class created by the New England educational system, namely, the clergy, was in practical life brought back into the most intimate contact with the ordinary people. Another reason grows out of the frontier conditions which obtained even a few miles out of Boston. In the little groups of settlers which made their way into the wilderness, exclusiveness would have been impossible had any one desired it. There was in each settlement perhaps one boy in five years who prepared for college. For this one boy there could be no dual school system. At least in his early years, in common with the other children, he was trained in letters and religion by the one and only school which the community could afford. Later the preacher might take an interest in giving him special tutoring, or the boy might be sent for a time to a preparatory school. In either case the major part of his school experience was in common with the pupils who were not going to a professional school.

Under conditions such as have been sketched,

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only one possible kind of exclusiveness could grow up. The higher schools could detach themselves from the lower schools and could become separate in their methods and in their content of instruction. There was no possibility of a longitudinal split which would leave two parallel school systems. There was the possibility of a breach dividing the top from the bottom. This cleavage in the vertical unfortunately came and still in some measure divides our American schools.

The results of this cleavage between upper and lower schools will be considered more fully later. For the present we turn to three significant facts with regard to the internal organization of the early schools of New England which may be referred to as partial antidotes for the undemocratic cleavage between upper and lower schools. The inherent push toward democracy was strong in New England education in spite of the handicaps which came from partial imitation of Old-World institutions.

The first of these significant facts was clearly set forth in the quotation from the Connecticut

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statute given above. The early school of New England was a school where each child was brought into direct personal contact with the Scriptures. The Puritans had left their homes in Europe because they were unwilling to have any one stand between the individual and his direct personal contact with truth. In Europe there had been human authorities who parceled out the truth as they saw fit. In Europe to-day there is the same spirit. If one goes to a German *Volkschule*, one finds that instruction is predominantly oral. The teacher gives information orally to the children. This information has the stamp of official approval and it is officially safeguarded. The children get what the teacher gives and no more. There is no reference library in any *Volksschule*. Even in such a subject as geography, there is no textbook full of facts about all the countries in the world. The most impressive contrast between American schools and those of Europe to-day is that American schools are reading schools while the schools of Europe are schools where instruction is given orally by the teacher.

The far-reaching meaning of this fact, not

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alone for our school organization, but also for our national life, can hardly be overstated. The common man in this country demands the right to know through his own reading what is happening in the world. It may be that our newspapers are sensational and full of matter which cannot be defended as uplifting, but on the other side it is equally certain that they bring directly to the hands of the common people the materials out of which public opinion is made. Our people read and form their opinions. There is no authority which they will accept in place of their own judgments. This present-day situation has its roots in the fact that the Puritans established a reading school.

In a number of countries on the other side of the Atlantic there are to be found newspapers of a type which the American cannot understand. They are not intended to be complete or impartial. They are the instruments of control of an aristocratic government. Such newspapers will always be found in countries where instruction in the common school is oral.

There are other nations in the world, such as

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Mexico and Russia, where the newspaper can have no extensive influence because the people are illiterate. Democracy may be threatened by disorganization in such countries, but democracy has in the domination of a skillful aristocracy an enemy more powerful than disorganization. The Puritans laid the only sure foundations of both democracy and organization when they established a school which lays its chief emphasis on reading and gives unlimited training in this art to every boy and girl.

The second general fact of organization which is important to the student of American schools is that these schools were local in their management and control. If we put the matter in terms of the present-day situation, we may point out that there is no other great nation which is without a national minister of education clothed with authority. In the United States there is no national school system, no Federal authority in charge of our educational organization. There is a National Bureau of Education within the Department of the Interior, but its functions are purely and simply those of collecting statistical

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information about schools and taking care of Alaskan reindeer. Local control has slowly given place in the more progressive States to centralized supervision in certain matters. The growth of central authority has, however, been handicapped by jealousy on the part of local officials, with the result that State departments often have little more authority than has the National Bureau.

It sometimes requires superlative optimism to be complacent under the present-day local control of schools. Back in the old days of the town meeting the citizens took an interest in the teacher, the course of study, and the school building. They were aware of the problems that arose in educating their children. All through our history individual parents have been interested in these problems, sometimes to the extent of interfering with the schools; but as municipalities have grown the public has often allowed its large control of the schools to slip into the hands of cheap politicians and cowardly servants. Schools are locally controlled to-day — often very badly.

In 1837, Horace Mann, who had just been

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appointed secretary of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts, surveyed the schools of that State and, seeing the wretched conditions which resulted from lack of supervision, made the statement that the greatest catastrophe which had ever come to the State was the creation of independent school districts.

One cannot speak too vigorously about the defects of the district system and of local control. There is, however, one compensation for all the defects. A school system under local control can never become the tool of an aristocratic government. American schools may be as bad as the most severe critic pleases, but they are democratic.

The writer recalls a conversation with the eminent head of the schools of Munich who had visited American schools a few years before. In contrasting German schools with American schools he said: "We have no bad schools because all our schools are controlled from above. But we have no superlatively good schools. You in America have all kinds from the very worst to the very best. You have the advantage over

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us, on the whole, because some day you will be led by the examples of your excellent schools to a general improvement." This is the view of an observer of democracy who is not deceived by the apparent excellences of an artificial system.

There are in the United States to-day many plans and much discussion dealing with this problem of local control. We have enjoyed nearly to the full the fluctuating fortunes of local reforms and counter-reforms. We have been extremely democratic and partially centralized. We have been moving gradually in the direction of more control by State departments. What will the future bring? One element of the answer is clear. We cannot now have a dual and undemocratic system of schools. Local control, whatever its shortcomings, has carried us past that danger. Our task now is the constructive task of building up a new kind of central control — one which grows out of democracy and preserves its contributions while eliminating the defects of its crude beginnings.

The third characteristic of the New England

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school which must be discussed in order to make clear its democratic character has to do with its neglect of vocational training. The higher schools, as has been repeatedly shown, were vocational schools preparing chiefly for the clergy. The lower school was a general school making no vocational distinctions whatsoever. Everybody had a soul to save, and that was the only concern of the common school. The boy might later become a farmer or a carpenter; the girl would become a housewife; but these were not matters for the common school to think of at all.

Perhaps the simplest way to make this matter clear is to quote a statute passed by Connecticut at the same time that the school law above quoted brought into being the reading school. This statute on vocational training sets up an entirely different machinery of training and an absolutely different kind of governmental control. The law required that

all parents and masters do breed and bring up their children and apprentices in some honest lawful labor, or employment, either in husbandry or some

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other trade profitable for themselves and the commonwealth, if they will not nor cannot train them up in learning, to fit them for higher employments, and if any of the selectmen, after admonition by them given to such masters of families, shall find them still negligent of their duty, . . . the said selectmen, with the help of two magistrates, shall take such children or apprentices from them, and place them with some masters for years, boys until they come to be twenty-one, and girls to eighteen years of age complete.

This statement was of little avail. The reading school had a schoolmaster to promote its interests. Its organization was institutional and effective. Vocational education was left to diffuse and ineffective control. The reason why vocational education had to be rediscovered is perfectly clear in view of this history.

The omission of vocational training from the schools of this country made it easy for these schools to develop in a strictly democratic fashion, especially during the period when education was very limited in its scope. If only a few weeks a year are to be given to the schooling of children, there is enough general matter

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needed by all of them to fill profitably the school day and the school year. The school will naturally be limited throughout its curriculum to a common body of material administered alike to all pupils.

We are facing to-day a difficult problem in trying to keep our schools democratic and at the same time meet the demand for differentiated courses giving trade training to some and purely academic training to others. This pressure was evaded in early years because of the simplicity of the school program. As schools developed, however, and stretched over more days and years, it began to be a question whether a simple body of common material is all that is required. Furthermore, there has come in recent years tremendous social pressure from the business world. We are told by manufacturers that our children must be trained in industrial processes if America is to compete with the Old World. On the other side of the Atlantic nations have given children training in the vocations. This training has made them skillful. To be sure, specialized training has been easier

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to organize there than it will be here because a boy who is going into the trades over there knows it early and is willing to accept obediently his task in life. Our democratic system is confronted by a thousand difficulties not known in a land where people are pigeon-holed at birth. But we must do something. What shall it be?

Just before the war there were some self-appointed prophets who clamored in our ears that we must follow the example of Prussia. They were proposing to our legislatures the passing of laws that should divide our school system into two compartments. These voices are not yet silent, and when the stress of industrialism comes in the future America will again be called on to defend the fundamental democracy of her common schools. The future defense cannot lie in neglecting vocational education. There must be a positive policy to meet our needs. This positive policy will doubtless change the character of the upper grades of our elementary schools. Courses will be offered to meet the many needs of different children. In order to keep the children in these many different

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courses interested in a central body of common material there will have to be a new study of what is required to train a citizen of a democracy. There will be much need of wise counsel and careful experimentation.

There is one lesson that our past should teach us. We must not seek an easy solution of our problem by borrowing a European institution. We did that once with sad consequences, as the next chapter will show.

IV

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THE natural evolution of the schools of the United States received a very material check through the importation into this country between 1840 and 1850 of the German *Volksschule*. The conditions that led to this disastrous importation of a foreign institution had long been in process of preparation. The spirit of colonial days with its rigorous devotion to religion and its violent reaction against European modes of life had given place to a new spirit of secularism and to a lack of rigid control in the various districts which made it very easy for public-minded leaders to desire something like the organization exhibited in Europe.

During the period immediately following the Revolution the schools of the United States sank to a lower ebb than ever before. The people of different States had very different ideals in such matters and there was no national su-

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pervision of schools. Indeed, when the States framed the Constitution there was no disposition to take up matters of education. The New England educational plan, which grew out of the town meeting and the demand for strict religious instruction, was not acceptable to the Virginian who had grown up in a region of great plantations and private tutoring. When the Constitution was written education was left out, leaving the States and smaller communities to deal with their own problems.

It is hardly to be wondered at that these smaller units of population neglected educational matters in their efforts to meet the first emergencies of community life. They were absorbed in making roads and developing industries. The house has to be built before the family life of the home can begin, and so the school waited for other matters of more obvious and immediate concern.

How meager the school equipment was can be learned from some of the original documents. The following extracts from a school report of 1801 made by a committee in Taunton, Massa-

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chusetts, show what schools were like in that day:—

January 6th, 1801. Your committee visited a school kept in Rueben Richmond's house instructed by Mrs. Nabby Williams of 32 scholars. This school appeared in an uncultivated state the greater part of the scholars.

On the 26 of Feb., visited Mrs. Nabby Williams' school the second time and found that the scholars had made great proficiency in reading, spelling, writing and some in the grammar of the English language.

Nov. 10th, the committee visited and examined two Schools just opened; one kept in a school house, near Baylies works, of the number of 40 scholars, instructed by Mr. Philip Lee. This School we found to have made but small proficiency in reading, spelling and writing, and to be kept only six or seven weeks; upon inquiry why it should be taught no longer, we were informed that the ratio of school money for this School was and had been usually expended in paying the Master both for his service and board, and in purchasing the fire wood which is contrary to the usual custom of the town.

The other School, visited the same day, was kept near John Reed's consisting of the number of between 30 and 40 Scholars instructed by Mr. William

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Reed; This School, being formed into regular classes, appeared to have made a good and pleasing proficiency in reading, spelling, writing, some in arithmetic and others in the Grammar of the English language. This School's share of school money is expended to pay the Master for his service only, so that the School will be continued three months.

On the 8th day of December they visited a School kept in a School house near Seth Hodges, in number 30 Scholars instructed by Mr. John Dunbar. This School appeared in a good way of learning, and to be keep four months.

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Jan. 9th, 1801, visited a School kept by Mr. Thomas Macomber at the house of one Caswel in the precinct of 35 scholars. This School appeared very uncultivated. Many Scholars were not furnished with books, a striking mark of negligence some where. This evil must have a remedy, if we expect to receive the benefit of a school education.

Feby. 23rd, again visited Mr. Macomber's school the scholars remain uncultivated and in a poor way to improve an evident mark of neglect of their parents in furnishing books is a great evil in this school. The committee were unable to judge of the improvement of this school as its situation was changed, and a great part were new faces. Whenever a School changes ground, it ought to be the duty of the School

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Masters to give notice to the Committee for the change is so great that it is almost like closing a School.

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Feb'y. 26th, visited Mr. Dean's School 2 time, the Scholars were crowded into a small room, the air was exceedingly noxious. Many children were obliged to tarry at home for want of room and though the school was kept only a few weeks they were deprived of its advantages. A want of books was the complaint. The committee were anxiously desirous that this evil might have a remedy and were of opinion it may be easily done. The Scholars appeared to increase in knowledge & claim our approbation.

March 5th, visited two schools, one kept at Mr. Aaron Pratt's of the number of 30 scholars instructed by Mr. Philip Drown. This school appeared quite unimproved, and uncultivated in reading and spelling, some of them did better in writing. This uncultivated state did not appear to be from a fault in the children but, as your committee were informed, from the disadvantage of having had masters illegally qualified for their instruction; of which class is their present master unauthorized by law.¹

¹ Reprinted in the *Report of the School Committee of the City of Taunton, Mass.*, for the year ending December 31, 1915, pp. 68-73.

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The conditions shown in these quotations did not improve materially for thirty-five years. There was no regular course of study. Sometimes the teacher was fairly well trained and was eager to give the pupils a broad training. More commonly this was not true. In any case the course of study depended on the training of the teacher and the will of the community.

The school year was at most a few weeks in the winter. At this time in the year the pupils could be spared from the work of the farm. The cost of keeping schools in operation had to be considered, and most communities were slow to keep the schools open for any great length of time because of the expense entailed. Schools of four months' duration were considered long and generous. Many communities were satisfied with much less.

The duration of a pupil's school career was at that time quite indefinite. The big boys and girls of the district came to school year after year. If the teacher was able to manage them, they stayed. If not, they sometimes disposed of the teacher, and sometimes retired peace-

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fully only to try the experiment again the next year with the new teacher. The only governing consideration in most cases was the possession by the boy or girl of the necessary leisure and inclination. Girls went until they got married and boys until they hired out or became responsible citizens with more important duties to perform.

Such conditions could not go on indefinitely. After communities became prosperous and after the most urgent problems of mere living had been solved, there arose a demand for better schools. The State was called in to supervise and direct this public interest. Indeed, the middle of the last century was a period of general assertion by the States of their rights and of general assumption at State capitals of duties of public organization.

In 1837, the State of Massachusetts organized a board of education and appointed Horace Mann as its executive secretary. At about the same period New York, Ohio, and Michigan began to work out new school laws and establish improved schools.

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It was inevitable that the leaders of that day should be shocked by what they found in the schools. The lack of organization and the absence of supervision were too obvious to escape attention. It is vain to speculate on what might have happened if these leaders had worked out an American institution. What they did was to accept the European model.

There was in 1830 in Prussia a school organization of the same type as that which exists to-day. The essential features were sketched in an earlier chapter. There was a religious common school. This school drew its teachers from a separate normal training school. Its course of study was exclusively vernacular and rudimentary, but it was compact in its organization. Its discipline of the children was complete. It was the servant of the State and under the most complete supervision of the officers of the State. Entirely apart from this common school was the school of the aristocracy with its connections with higher institutions. In short, the Prussian school system was a machine running smoothly, and it was well in hand under the

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supervision of officials who were equipped with authority to control its operations.

It is little wonder that American leaders were impressed by the organization of the Prussian schools. Their enthusiasm found expression in statements full of praise and in active efforts to induce American legislatures to imitate the Prussian organization. The story of this period is vividly told in a bulletin of the United States Bureau of Education prepared by Mr. F. F. Bunker.

Quotations from three of the documents of that period will give the reader a view of the earnestness of these advocates of the Prussian system. Mr. Bunker's paragraph introducing one of these quotations may be quoted with the paragraph itself as follows:—

In 1843 Horace Mann visited the schools of Germany and of other European countries. An account of his visit is given in his seventh annual report to the board of education of Massachusetts (January, 1844). In this report he recommended the organization and grading of the German schools in the following words:—

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"I do not hesitate to say that there are many things abroad which we at home should do well to imitate — things, some of which are here as yet mere matters of speculation and theory, but which, there, have long been in operation and are now producing a harvest of rich and abundant blessings. Among the nations of Europe Prussia has long enjoyed the most distinguished reputation for the excellence of its schools. In reviews, in speeches, in tracts, and even in graver works devoted to the cause of education, its schools have been exhibited as models for the imitation of the rest of Christendom." ¹

Again from a pamphlet by Charles Brooks published in 1864 is extracted the following: —

"The Prussian system, with its two central powers, a board of education, and normal schools, was not known in New England when I first described it, in public, in 1835; but on the 19th of April, 1838, Massachusetts, the banner State, adopted State normal schools by statute. Remembering well how the good leaven spread in 1835-1838, I say it was the Prussian system which wrought out the educational regeneration of New England." ²

¹ Frank Forest Bunker, *Reorganization of the Public School System*, pp. 24-25. United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1916, no. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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Finally, from a Western State comes the statement made by a superintendent of public education, Francis W. Shearman, of Michigan, in 1852:—

“The system of public instruction which was intended to be established by the framers of the constitution [Michigan], the conception of the office, its province, its powers, and duties were derived from Prussia.”¹

The enthusiasm for Prussia had its effects not only in the United States, but also in Canada. Ryerson, the superintendent of schools who gave form to the system of Ontario in the late forties, explicitly acknowledged his indebtedness to Prussia for the course of study of the elementary schools.

One very striking fact about this whole movement is that it was limited to the common schools. One can hardly help wondering at this distance why these enthusiasts did not borrow the higher schools as well. Perhaps the answer to this question is to be found in the fact that they were democratic enough to be interested

¹ Frank Forest Bunker, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

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only in the common people. It was the common school of this country which was chaotic. It was the common school which lacked clearly defined aims and ends. There were certain higher schools in the country, but they were able to take care of themselves fairly well. The common schools were important because they dealt with more people and were entirely dependent on public support.

Whatever the reason, it is quite certain that it was the *Volksschule*, not the *Gymnasium*, that was borrowed. This borrowing would not have been so disastrous as it was if the negative characteristics of the *Volksschule* were not so essentially a part of that institution. The *Volksschule* is intended to terminate the training of the common people. Its material of instruction is selected with this end constantly in view. Limitation of educational opportunity is not accidental or due merely to meagerness of opportunity. In the *Volksschule* limitation is conscious, explicit, and a definite part of the whole scheme.

The *Volksschule* is negative in that it forbids teaching a foreign language or algebra.

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Advanced subjects are *verboten* because such advanced subjects might disturb the social equilibrium. It was this negative, explicitly limiting school which in the middle of the last century we exchanged for our chaotic and only partially successful district school. So it has come about that for three quarters of a century American boys and girls have been compelled to spend the first years of their school lives within the artificial walls that the traditions of medievalism and the will of aristocracy have thrown around the common people of Germany.

The negative characteristics of the course of study of the common schools were not seriously harmful in '1850 because the schools were limited in other ways. The school year was short. There was not time enough to go far afield in the world of knowledge. That the school must hold to the vernacular and to rudiments was dictated in some measure by the meagerness of support to the school itself. Teachers, too, were little trained, and they could hardly have done more even if it had been demanded. So the bor-

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rowing of a limited school was no such misdeed as it would be to-day. We may even go so far as to say that it was not the borrowing that did the harm. We of a later generation are in reality the sinners, for we have blindly followed the example of the *Volksschule* long after it became evident — painfully evident — that this school did not belong in America.

The limited course of study borrowed in 1840 became undesirable just as soon as the school year was lengthened sufficiently so that the rudimentary branches did not supply adequate material for the years of elementary instruction. Take for example arithmetic. There was perhaps enough arithmetic to last for twelve or sixteen weeks a year through eight years. But when twelve weeks were expanded into five months, and later into six, seven, eight, and nine, it became quite impossible for arithmetic to be legitimately extended so as to fill the time. The fact is that later generations of teachers should have known enough to realize that they had reached the end of arithmetic, but they were dominated by the *Volksschule* idea of hold-

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ing to rudimentary courses. They exercised all the ingenuity they had in trying to inflate arithmetic so that it would seem to fill the elementary course. They put in impossible and grotesque problems and they gathered together matters from the world of economics which were entirely unintelligible to children, but they saw to it that children did not escape from the rudimentary mathematics, which is arithmetic.

Nor was the evil of the Prussian example limited to what it gave in the way of artificial emphasis on rudiments. When we took over the *Volksschule* we did no halfway borrowing. We made it the only lower school. At home the Prussian aristocrat provides for his own boy another school where opportunity is unlimited. In the aristocratic school there is no need for inflating arithmetic because the boy is pushed as soon as possible into higher subjects. In America we did not set up the *Volksschule* plus something else; we made the limited school the vestibule to our whole educational scheme. The result has been that we have deliberately held back those destined to take higher courses. For ex-

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ample, with us the doctor arrives late at his professional maturity because he spent so much time and effort on rudiments in the elementary school. He was kept back when he ought to have gone forward into the advanced subjects which would have prepared him for his profession.

In Prussia the doctor-in-training is not subject to the limitations of the *Volksschule*. The boy in Germany who is to be a doctor is educated in the *Gymnasium*. In that school he is rushed into the advanced subjects just as early as possible. There is no marking time. The professional goal is always in sight, and the tracks are cleared ahead for the journey. The result is that the German doctor enters his profession two years ahead of the American doctor. Those two years are of the greatest significance in a professional career. They supply the margin that makes of the average physician abroad a scientist as well as a practitioner. This explains why our physicians used to go abroad to learn the advanced science of their profession.

Whether we think of the effect of the bor-

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rowing of 1840 on the elementary school or on the other branches of our educational system, it is evident that there is only one formula which we ought now to adopt. This borrowing must be corrected by whatever reorganization is necessary.

The upper grades of the elementary school are the points where reform must begin and where it must be most radical. Our seventh and eighth grades show more than any other grades the blighting influences of the Prussian example. In the effort to keep these grades rudimentary, they have been filled with the most monotonous, unnecessary, and discouraging reviews. Seventh- and eighth-grade teachers are more than half aware that elementary education is over when pupils enter these grades. So they labor conscientiously to polish the product of these schools. They go over and over again work which has been completed in earlier years. They keep young minds, which are eager to push out into the world, forcibly restrained by a kind of trivial intellectual busy-work. They hold the high school before the pupils of the

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eighth grade as a place where one can succeed only when one is perfect in arithmetic and oral reading and spelling. The curious part of the situation is that every elementary-school teacher who has been through high school knows full well that one does not have to be perfect in anything, least of all in arithmetic, oral reading, and spelling, to be an honored member of the student body of a high school. The insistent reviews of the eighth grade are not real needs of the twentieth century. They are inheritances from a far-off land and a long-past day. From that remote place and time there came the edict that the sons and daughters of the common folk shall be taught for eight years and that then the teaching shall cease. The American teacher who halts before the eight-year line is controlled, not by a real fact, but by an imaginary boundary.

V

THE STRUGGLE FOR AN UNDIVIDED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

THE *Volksschule* has been an obstacle to our educational development, but fortunately it has not supplied the only form of school organization in this country. Even its outward forms have never become universal. The *Volksschule* is an eight-year school. Our schools have been largely drawn into this form of organization, but there has always been a fringe of experimentation which has saved us from a rigid system. In New England we have nine- and ten-year elementary schools. In the Southern States we have, especially since the Civil War, whole State systems with only seven-year elementary schools. In all parts of the country there are schools which have forms of organization other than that dictated by the Prussian example.

Perhaps the most notable deviation from the eight-year program is to be found in the sys-

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tem of Kansas City, Missouri, where seven-year schools have been in successful operation for a generation.

Not only has practice thus differed, but there has been strong advocacy in earlier years of reforms of even more radical types. The Committee of Ten of the National Education Association proposed in the early nineties a complete revision of the elementary program so that the school below the high school should be only six years in length.

Against these radical influences the *Volkschule* has been able to stand and stands to-day as the most common type of organization. Especially subtle is its influence in limiting the course of study. Even where, as in New England, more than eight years have been given to the elementary school, the additional time has been wasted in useless reviews and repetitions.

Reforms in the elementary school promise to be made from above if not from within. If the elementary-school teachers do not change the character of seventh- and eighth-grade instruction, it is likely that the high school will compel

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the change and that pressure from the professional schools will help the reform.

The intimate influence of the upper schools on the elementary schools of this country is one of the factors of the educational situation which has no parallel in Prussia. There the *Volksschule* has gone on its way undemocratized because it is a separate school. The moment this school was transplanted to America, it was given a new setting, and this new setting resulted in changes which, though gradual, are sure to transform it ultimately and make it into something that it could not be on its native soil.

Before the common school was made over to fit the Prussian example, there had been growing up in America a peculiarly American institution which was not seriously disturbed in its evolution by the borrowing of 1840. This was the American academy.

All through the eighteenth century academies had appeared in response to popular demand. In the first half of the nineteenth century they flourished. In villages and towns surrounded by groups of district schools academies were estab-

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lished for older pupils. Not infrequently such a school was supported by some evangelical organization which was keenly alive to the desirability of combining the secular and religious instruction of its young people. Sometimes the academy was endowed by a citizen or was maintained out of tuition fees and a small subsidy from the public taxes. In any case, it expressed the demand on the part of the people for something beyond that which the district school could supply.

The ambitions of the academy were unbounded. The course of study included whatever the teachers knew. So the academy offered courses in metaphysics and theology, in art and literature. Foreign languages, especially French, were taught. General history and other subjects intended to broaden the experiences of students were conspicuous in the curriculum. All this wealth of training was open to girls as well as boys.

To be sure, there are evidences that this enriched course of study was influenced not a little by the practices of the older grammar school. There was no escape from the classical traditions

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of that school, and the academy in order to be respectable offered what the grammar school offered. A curious mixture grew up as a result. The ambition of the common people was to give to all the young people a broad and complete education. They could not satisfy their own ambition without including in the new school all that had been approved in the higher schools of the past.

When in due time, after the middle of the nineteenth century, the high school of the type which is common to-day united the grammar school and the academy into a single institution, the mixture of ambitions and the composite course of study were taken over into the new school. It is quite possible to hear to-day at any meeting of high-school teachers the echoes of the old dispute. Is a high school a classical school preparatory to the college and to the professions, or is the high school the higher common school?

Several facts should be emphasized in order that we may fully understand the influence of the academy and of the high school on the evolution of the common school. First, the high

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school as it was finally developed out of the fusion of the two older schools was open to all comers. The only requirement was the completion of the elementary course. Second, this school came in due time to be as free as the common school. Third, boys and girls entered on a like footing and have continued to have equally free access to the enlarged opportunity. The American high school is in reality a part of the free public-school system. In our day progressive States have fully recognized this and have perfected the organization to the point where every boy or girl in the State is provided with free admission to some high school even where there is none in the immediate district in which he or she lives. In such cases the home district or the State pays tuition and in some cases the cost of travel. As a part of the public-school system, the high school has influenced the other branch of this system — the elementary school.

The influence of one school on the other has grown stronger as the number of pupils passing on from the lower school has increased. It is an important fact for elementary schools that to-

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day it is the desire of the great majority of families that their children have a high-school course. This is in part a result of economic prosperity. The majority of families can afford to give their children more schooling than is provided by the elementary school. In part the desire is an expression of a genuine respect for training. At all events, the result is very impressive. There are at the present time in the high schools of the United States thirty per cent of all who are of high-school age. This numerical fact alone shows how far progress has been made toward the fusion of the elementary school with the high school.

The foregoing paragraphs make clear the historical reason why we do not have in the United States two different school systems — one elementary and the other advanced. In this country the high school literally grew out of the elementary school. The separation between the common school and the grammar school which might have led to two school systems was obliterated by the evolution of the academy and the amalgamation of the academy with the grammar school. The academy was an institution of the common

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people and it dominated the organization of the high school far enough to prevent any paralleling in the high school of the work of the elementary school. The American high school is thus different from all European secondary schools; the latter always include primary grades and intermediate grades as well as the upper grades which are alone included in our high schools.

Thus it has come about that in America we have a single continuous school system. Whatever the differences between the schools within this system, in outward form we have a single unified system.

It may be well to digress for a little at this point in order to show how important is the unity of the school system of the United States. The English effort to achieve something of the same kind has been most earnest and protracted. England has, as have the other countries of Europe, common schools for the ordinary people and separate schools for the aristocracy. The common schools of England began as missionary enterprises and are now characterized by the fact that they are free. They are socially of a lower grade

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than the schools of the aristocracy which are known as "secondary schools." Even to-day it is not permissible for one who is well-to-do to send one's children to the common school. The secondary schools are tuition schools with an extensive curriculum and they train the favored children of the better families from their early years. This system could not continue as a hard-and-fast system of separation in democratic England. The plan was accordingly devised of allowing bright children to transfer from the limited common school into the unlimited secondary school, provided they show themselves able to pass an examination. Furthermore, there are many "bursaries," as they are called, or "scholarships" as we should call them, which are awarded to those who do well in these examinations. A bright child thus has the secondary-school course made free and accessible through examination.

The term "educational ladder" was coined by Matthew Arnold, when he was an inspector under the English Board of Education, to describe this plan of allowing a child from the common school to cross over into the higher schools.

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That the opportunity is highly appreciated is attested by many facts. In 1902 the number of secondary schools was greatly increased. Municipal institutions of secondary grade are now common, offering large and varied opportunities of a type desired by the boys and girls of the common families; and a great many children are passing over from the common school into these democratic secondary institutions. There is only one difficulty. The crossing is not as easy as the common people desire. One of the labor leaders put the matter vigorously by saying, "We want not merely an educational ladder; we want what they have in America, an educational stairway."

The English system of transfer by examination is often objected to by the teachers in the secondary schools. Suppose, for example, that a boy from the common school transfers when he is twelve years old. On arriving at the secondary school, he finds that boys of his age who began in their earlier years in the secondary school have had certain courses which were not supplied in the common school. For example, the common-school boy has had no French or Latin while

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the secondary-school boys have been studying these subjects several years. The conservative teachers in the secondary schools are outspoken in their criticism of the transfer system because of the difficulty of assimilating the new pupils.

The digression will help us to appreciate the unique character of our unified school system. The American academy did not begin as a parallel and separate secondary school. It was an outgrowth of the lower school.

We cannot fail to recognize the fact that there is something of a break between our elementary schools and our high schools in spite of the promise of the academy. It is known to every one who has passed through our educational system that the elementary school stops and the high school begins, sometimes with a noticeable jolt to the student. The break is our inheritance from an undemocratic past. It represents the degree of our failure to assimilate the lower and higher schools into a single system.

The break in our school system shows itself in externals and in matters of internal organization. The high school is usually in a building entirely

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separate from the grades. Not uncommonly there are different people in charge. Sometimes the boards of education of the two schools are different. Commonly the principal of the high school is a man who has no connection with the lower schools.

In the treatment of students the high school and the elementary school are very different. The high school accords the individual student great liberty. He is usually allowed to move about the building as he finds necessary for all sorts of purposes, such as visiting the library or attending classes or getting his luncheon. The elementary-school pupil moves about only as a member of the class to which he belongs and then under strict supervision of the teacher.

The teaching forces of the two schools are likely to be separate, not merely in their duties, but in spirit. High-school teachers do not want to attend teachers' conventions, and they are often proud of the fact that they know nothing about the problems of elementary education. The high-school teacher is a specialist and he cannot be interested in general school matters.

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The result is that in teaching the specialty to which he is devoted the high-school teacher does little or nothing to relate his work to that of other divisions of either the high school or the system in general.

More fundamental, however, than any other cause of separation between the high school and the elementary school is the radical change in the subject-matter of instruction which the pupil experiences in passing from the elementary school to the high school. The elementary school, bound by its traditions, gives nothing but rudimentary, vernacular instruction. When the pupil arrives in the high school he is rushed without delay into a wholly different intellectual atmosphere. In the high-school classes the work aims to be advanced, and the most commonly emphasized subject is foreign language. The student finds himself required to begin Latin with a teacher who very often knows absolutely nothing of the way in which he studied English and English grammar. He begins algebra with a teacher who sometimes speaks of arithmetic and the ignorance of that subject exhibited by every

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member of the class. The student may wonder about the true relation between arithmetic and algebra and why they are both called mathematics, but he will have little or no time to indulge in such speculations. He is dragged rapidly through chapter after chapter of this new and highly abstract subject, often wondering what it is all about and why anybody wants him to study it. Even the English which he gets in high school seems to bear little relation to the long, laborious studies which he pursued in the elementary classes called reading and grammar.

Paragraphs on the breach between the elementary school and the high school can hardly be overwritten. The numerous withdrawals from school during the first year of the high school bear eloquent testimony to the confusion which many a boy and girl experience in trying to take advantage of our unitary, continuous education.

It is difficult to assign with complete justice the blame for this situation. Certain it is that in the first half of the nineteenth century the American academy had gone far toward realizing the truly democratic ideal of a continuous school

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system. It is equally certain that the Latin school still represented the tendency toward complete division which characterized the schools of Europe. Finally, into this unsettled situation came the German *Volksschule*. This last influence powerfully reënforced the tendency toward separation which survived in the organization of the Latin school.

Whatever the sources of the difficulty, the main fact is that separation between the elementary school and the high school still persists and must be removed before we shall have a truly democratic system. Our present problem is not to spend time settling a matter of historical dispute. Enough for us to see that there are to-day as in the past forces making for and against the union of our upper and lower schools. Once the problem is clear, our duty is equally plain. We must carry forward the program of the American academy. The continuity of education which that school represented is more in keeping with our democratic institutions than the exclusiveness of the Latin school or the narrow, limiting influences of the *Volksschule*.

VI

PRESSURE WITHIN THE HIGH SCHOOL

EVERY period doubtless seems to those who live and work in it to be more fruitful of reform than any preceding time in the world's history. Perhaps we exaggerate the extent and importance of the school reforms of the last twenty years, but they seem to be broad in scope and profound in meaning for the future. Even if there had been no war with its accompanying revival of national spirit and enthusiasm for democracy, the schools of the United States were on the point of achieving a new and more highly unified organization. With the influence of the war operating to accelerate reform and to sweep away every vestige of aristocratic discrimination, the changes of the next ten years may be expected to be of the first order of importance.

Let us consider briefly the influences which were operating before the war to reform the schools of the United States. The impressive

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fact is that there were movements toward change in every branch of school organization. The elementary-school teachers were conscious that their work needed to be carried on differently. Especially were they anxious to eliminate from the rudimentary courses all artificial and unproductive sections, and at the same time they were eager to bring their pupils at an earlier age into contact with the rich, new materials which modern science has contributed as guides to industry and life. The high-school teachers no less than the elementary-school teachers were seeing the necessity of reform because the cramped space of four years allotted to secondary education can no longer contain the accumulating courses which the high school has to offer. More time and more range of opportunity are consequently eagerly sought by the high school. Finally, school administrators were becoming aware of the necessity of better organization. Scientific tests of school work were exhibiting weaknesses in the present arrangement which cannot be tolerated when brought explicitly to the surface. The old-fashioned complacency with schools had

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given place to an internal restlessness which called loudly for reform.

It is not necessary in a general discussion of this type to expatiate on the growing ambition of the elementary school to give a richer course of study. Nor will it be appropriate to review the many impressive results of tests. The less obvious and less commonly understood influence of the pressure within the high school for more time in which to do its work may be selected for brief discussion because this pressure has operated to determine in no small measure the form in which recent reorganization has been attempted.

The high school of 1870 had no serious difficulty in planning the program of the individual student. There were courses in higher mathematics which had long been traditional; there were courses in Latin and Greek which carried forward the classical traditions, and, finally, there were a few scattered subjects included in the curriculum as concessions to the practical interests of the students and the half-recognized probability that the ordinary student would

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have very little use for the "solid" courses above mentioned.

From 1870 on, the world moved forward at a bewilderingly rapid rate. New sciences grew up overnight. The doctrine of biological evolution, once started on its career of intellectual conquest, was making animal and human life a matter of common interest and a subject of scientific treatment. Industry was evolving new applications of physics and chemistry at such a rapid rate that the school could not keep up with the pace. As a result, the demand for science began to be heard from students and patrons.

Stimulated by the new materials which soon crystallized into scientific curricula, the teachers of literary subjects found that there were new possibilities in their fields. The modern languages were offered as the present-day counterparts of the classics. To be sure, there was a clear statement again and again of the belief that the modern languages were inferior as subjects of instruction and as means of intellectual enlightenment. But in spite of this, they came in an increasing volume.

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With the emphasis on current material came the phenomenal growth of English courses. No one could object to the study of the vernacular. Led by Harvard's example, the colleges, the science teachers, and the classicists all agreed that English must have a place in the high school. The result was English and more English. No one can deny that English is now in. The problem seems to be these days to find room in the tent for the other members of the caravan.

Somewhat late in the scramble for place came the historians. They were represented at first by the teachers of Greek and Roman history who had sheltered themselves under the roof of the classical temple. But that seemed in later days to be an unsafe shrine, and the historians began to build their own more modern edifice. To drop the figure and speak in plain modern terms, the historians began to ask for a place in the sun, but they found the places crowded.

When we come down to the period of the Committee of Ten, or any later date that one may choose, we find that there is not enough room in the high-school program for those who

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are there. Yet the company increases. Forging and woodwork, sewing and cooking, commercial subjects and an endless line of technical courses begin to appear. The places which were crowded in 1900 began to be at a higher premium in 1910.

The crowding of the high-school curriculum was temporarily relieved by the adoption of the elective system. Foreign observers who saw American schools launching on the elective plan shook their heads and commented on the inability of immature students to choose for themselves. It appeared in practical experience that pupils were often confused, while parents sometimes favored the plan and sometimes objected to it. But the plan spread until it has become the established practice of our high schools. The elective system relieved the congestion for a time and students distributed themselves throughout the courses, but the various subjects were so attractive that even the elective system failed to relieve the congestion permanently.

The next measure which was adopted grew up gradually as a practice rather than as a con-

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scious plan. It was the practice of giving students more subjects. Instead of administering three or four courses as in the older high schools, the new schools let pupils into four, then five, and finally six. To be sure, six subjects a day seem to be a little distracting when one faces the number in cold blood. But the demands of modern life are strenuous. It is quite certain, too, that the teacher who teaches one of six subjects to a student each day will have to be content with a relatively small fraction of the student's time and energy. But there are a great many teachers and they must have students, so the students will have to be divided among them.

This is not by any means the whole story. The science teachers met after the sciences had been admitted into the brotherhood of high-school courses and took action stating that no student is scientific unless he has at least four consecutive years of science. The history teachers took the same action with regard to history. Latin was there ahead of the rest, but in order to make its position perfectly clear issued the statement

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that no one can get real good out of Latin if he takes less than four years. English and German and French and Spanish followed suit. The result of all this passing of resolutions is an impression on the lay mind that it is quite hopeless for any American boy or girl to expect to get an education in a high school.

The layman's view is of some importance, but still more important is the fact that high-school teachers finally became aware that they had to have more time. Where could they get it?

There is a long story growing out of this competition of departments. It reaches into the college at one end of the high-school course and into the elementary school at the other. The fact is that what we have tried to work out as a high-school curriculum in American schools cannot be contained in four years.

As a practical and preliminary adjustment the colleges took up part of the task or, rather, continued to do part of the work of secondary instruction. There never has been a time when American colleges have not done a great deal of

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secondary work. In recent years this has been the more obvious because much of the work of freshman and sophomore years has been carried on without high-school prerequisites. It has long been possible in every American college for the student to elect first-year French and first-year German. He can also begin history and science. The question has been asked: Why not let a college freshman begin Latin? If he wants Greek these days, he usually has to postpone the subject to college and often to the divinity school. These questions and conditions grow out of the fact that the present high school cannot do all that is required to complete a secondary education.

At the other end of the high-school course, the seventh and eighth grades are beginning to do some of the work which used to be assigned to the ninth and tenth grades. Many an eighth-grader these days knows the *Merchant of Venice* better than did the high-school senior of 1890. Science has made a lame and halting attempt to enter the elementary school, and enough progress has been made so that the principle is now

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well established that science of some kind belongs in the lower school.

While the internal pressure in the high school is thus working toward a breaking-down of the high-school bounds, the science of education is coöperating powerfully to unsettle the rigid organization of the high school. Studies of the mental achievements of high-school students and of their mental characteristics make it clear that the high-school age begins before fourteen. The striking facts of growth which mark the beginning of adolescence are so easily open to observation and record that one of the first great studies of the science of education dealt with this period. The effect of this study of adolescence was to raise many questions of school organization which will not be put aside until they are answered by a genuine reorganization of the high school.

It is not the function of this volume to deal with the problems of high-school reorganization or to follow further the implications of the comments which have been made on the college course. It is important for the present discus-

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sion, however, that we note the fact that restlessness within the high school dictated the form in which changes are to-day being made in the upper years of the elementary school.

The institution organized to bridge over the gap between elementary school and high school has taken on a name which shows that the high school is expanding. The new institution is called a "junior high school." In this new school the forms of organization are patterned after those of the high school. Pupils are given responsibilities similar to those assigned to high-school pupils. The courses are enriched and brought over from high-school fields.

Some antagonism has been aroused by the name. Perhaps it would be better to use a less specific term which elementary-school teachers would regard as appropriate to their work. Historically, there will always be justification for a recognition of the fact that the expansion of the high school was a determining factor in the reorganization of our school system.

Whatever the antagonism to the name "junior high school," the institution is here as one

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of the most promising solutions of the problem of democratizing our school system. We must try to understand it and make use of it for the purpose for which it originated, namely, to cure the breach between elementary schools and high schools.

VII

WHAT IS A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL?

IF one visits ten junior high schools and tries to generalize on what one has seen, it will be found difficult to make any statements which apply equally to all of these institutions.

All of them are, indeed, recent in their origin. The movement is about a decade old. It has spread rapidly in recent years, so that it is probable that out of ten samples five will be not more than two or three years old.

Most junior high schools have adopted a departmentalized form of class organization. This type of organization in which teachers specialize in one subject, or in a very limited group of subjects, while the pupils pass during the day from teacher to teacher for the full series of their studies was by no means uncommon in elementary grades before the junior high school appeared. Departmentalization is, however, so characteristic of all ordinary high-school courses

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that the application of the name "junior high school" to any seventh or eighth grade having this organization is very natural.

Beyond the common characteristics of extreme youth and departmentalization there are likely to be few points of complete agreement among junior high schools. Some of these institutions include the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Some include two and some only one of these grades.

Sometimes the junior high school is housed with the elementary school. Sometimes, though less frequently, it has a building of its own, and sometimes it is in the high-school building.

In teaching staff, the junior high school usually aims to have more highly trained teachers than do the seventh and eighth grades. But this theory is often overlooked in practical organization and teachers from the grades are in charge as they would be if there were no junior high school. Indeed, in some cases the junior high school has furnished the excuse for putting teachers of inferior academic training in charge of the ninth grade.

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Whatever diversities appear in other matters, they are completely eclipsed by the variations in courses of study. In one type of junior high school there is no departure whatsoever from the courses of study which preceded the re-christening. At the other extreme is the junior high school which carried down into the seventh grade high-school algebra and high-school Latin. In one case observed by the writer this was attempted without any modification of the courses to adapt them to the seventh grade. Even the textbooks were those used in high-school classes.

A common form of reorganization of the curriculum which some writers have taken as characteristic of the movement is found in junior high schools which differ from elementary schools only in the fact that they teach a great deal of handwork. This handwork in some institutions takes the form of industrial courses.

It should be remarked in passing that it is a fundamental mistake to identify industrial classes in the seventh and eighth grades with the junior-high-school movement in general. It is

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true that this is the form in which the junior high school appears in some systems, but it is not the only form, nor is it the characteristic form.

Between the extreme forms of curriculum which have been mentioned there is every variety of intermediate form. There is the school which offers as an extra an opportunity for the pupils to begin a foreign language. Back of this offering is the assumption that the child is going on into a senior high school and will be carried over more readily into the new high-school courses through this preliminary training.

Sometimes the elective foreign language is offered not as an extra but as a substitute for English grammar, it being held that English grammar will be best taught through the medium of the new grammatical structures to which the child will be introduced in this elective study.

Another intermediate form of reorganization of the curriculum is exhibited in some institutions which offer, not a full technical curriculum, but elective courses in a few of the manual arts. In earlier times this would have been de-

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scribed as an extension of the elementary curriculum, not as a serious change in the spirit of the school. But the name "junior high school" has become popular, and many school systems have felt that they must have the name even on the slight justification of a new course in woodworking or cooking.

Science has in some cases been the new element which has differentiated the junior high school from its predecessor. Again, it has been commercial courses, or some very elementary form of training for office work such as business penmanship or bookkeeping.

The mathematics courses of the junior high school differ most commonly from the conventional seventh- and eighth-grade arithmetic in the addition of some of the methods of rapid calculation common to so-called "business arithmetic."

Such in brief summary is the variety which one is likely to find when one visits various junior high schools. Some observers have come back from a tour of this kind full of cynicism and pessimism about the movement. It is a sham

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imitation, they tell us, an effort to do in a cheap way in the upper elementary grades what the high school should be left to do.

To one who has sympathy with the positions which have been developed in earlier chapters of this volume the apparent chaos of the junior-high-school movement will be neither a surprise nor a source of discouragement. The junior high school has grown up in democratic America as the last chapter in the history of the struggle against the medieval dual system. The junior high school is the device which modern society has developed in its effort to throw off the limitations of an artificial eight-year, rudimentary, vernacular school. The junior high school is a device to heal the breach between the elementary school and the high school. Of course, the junior high school must be in its early days full of crudities and variations. There will be those who misuse the name and fail to express the spirit of the movement. But if the choice between continuation of the old system and experimentation mixed with some crudities is presented to an intelligent society, there can

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be very little doubt what the decision will be. What is needed is not a suppression of the movement but a wise guidance of its progress.

Defense of the junior high school need not delay us long in the light of what has been said in earlier chapters. It is important, however, that an appeal be made to principals of elementary schools, teachers of seventh and eighth grades and school superintendents, that they think of the movement from the point of view of the school system as a whole and recognize it, not merely as an expansion downward of the high school, but also and chiefly as a necessary evolution of the elementary school.

The elementary school no less than the high school has been forced by its own internal development to change its content of instruction and its methods. The extension of the school year, to which reference was made in an earlier chapter, of necessity compelled the expansion of the course of study. The better equipment of schools has tended in the same direction. So has the improved training of teachers.

The better-trained teachers have observed

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that pupils of twelve years of age can be given responsibilities of a type impossible in the lower grades. As a result there is a very different social atmosphere in the upper grades than there used to be when discipline was of an arbitrary type. Formerly, the assumption was that children must be suppressed; now, that they must be drawn out. Especially is it true of children in the upper grades of the elementary school that their interests should be satisfied and their natural ambitions to become a part of adult society fostered. This change in social spirit is sure to be followed by a change in intellectual atmosphere.

Principals of elementary schools are usually reluctant to lose their seventh and eighth grades because they consider them helpful in maintaining the discipline and intellectual atmosphere of the school. The plea is accordingly made that the changes in the course of study be made without disturbing the organization of the grades.

In answer to this plea it should be pointed out so emphatically that there will be no possibility

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of the conclusion being forgotten that the junior-high-school movement is based on exactly the considerations which lead the elementary-school principal to want to retain his upper grades. It is because seventh- and eighth-grade pupils are able to take responsibilities and because they are eager to know more of the world, that larger opportunities and opportunities of a higher type should be offered to them.

The argument must, however, be pushed much further. The enrichment of the upper grades will serve society most effectively if it is recognized that along with enrichment of the program there must be recognition of individual differences in pupils. At twelve years of age and after, the child begins to look forward to the demands of his adult life. It is not necessary to plunge him at once into a trade when he is twelve, but it is important that his individual tastes and capacities begin to be given play. This means flexibility in the school organization. This means in turn the gathering together of enough eighth grades and seventh grades to justify variety and richness in the course. If a school system is

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large enough to bring into one building one hundred and twenty eighth-graders, the variety of work which can be offered is obviously greater than the variety which can be offered to six separate grades of twenty each scattered about in the elementary schools of the city.

The elementary-school principal who objects to losing his eighth grade can be encouraged to derive no small consolation from the wholly unsolved problem to be worked out by some intelligent school man in discovering the kind of material of instruction most appropriate to the intermediate grades. Problems of the sixth, fifth, and fourth grades have been too much neglected because principals have been absorbed in the primary grades and higher grades.

The appeal which the junior high school should make to those in charge of the upper grades and those who are to take over these grades in the new organization is no mere personal appeal. Up to this time the upper grades have been handicapped by the traditions of the borrowing of 1840. These traditions must be thrown off and in their place must come a course of study

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worked out experimentally and checked by scientific tests. Let all who have launched this movement in any one of its manifold forms turn now to a careful impersonal evaluation of their achievements. Is Latin successful? Is manual training successful? What characteristics of junior-high-school pupils need to be recognized in constructing the course of study? We have thrown away Old-World traditions; do not let us substitute for the older organization mere individual guesses and controversies about names. Let us go about this new and democratic task in a thoroughly scientific way.

There can hardly be any doubt that the following general principles will guide the further evolution of our school system: —

The day is past when the eight-year curriculum can continue to be made up of vernacular, rudimentary courses.

The elementary curriculum is in process of enrichment, and at the same time that it is enlarged it must be freed from artificial and useless material which tradition has kept in the school.

Absolute continuity of educational opportu-

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nity must be provided. The breaks which have been brought over from antiquated systems of education must be closed up.

The adoption of these principles assures far-reaching reforms. There need be no pessimism if the reforms follow various lines in different places provided we keep the situation sufficiently flexible to permit constant readjustment to meet ever-growing needs, and provided we select by carefully directed scientific tests the sound results of our experimentation and make these the foundations of all future organization.

VIII

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND ECONOMY

Two urgent considerations have come vividly to attention in recent years, both pushing us toward the type of reorganization of schools found in the junior high school. The first of these is the scientific principle of individual differences; the second is the practical demand for economy.

All the recent studies of school children reveal the existence of mental and physical differences so great that they must be taken into account in arranging any educational program. For example, pupils in the second grade show striking differences in their ability to read. One reads at a rate of eight words a minute while another reads at the rate of more than a hundred words in the same period. The degree of comprehension differs in even wider ranges, reaching from zero to ninety per cent for material of moderate difficulty. In arithmetic differences appear in the early grades not only in degree but in kind.

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One child multiplies well but does not add well. Another shows just the reverse. Like facts turn up in every field of study.

The individual differences which appear in the early grades accumulate as the pupils pass through year after year. It makes no difference how rigidly the courses are prescribed; there will be individual picking and choosing from the intellectual opportunities offered until finally individual differences begin to make themselves felt as matters of importance which cannot be ignored.

There was a time when it would have been said that these differences must be overcome. That was the period when the concept of equality was interpreted as involving little more than the idea of uniformity. Because men and children are equal it was believed that they must be treated exactly alike. There is much in our school program to-day that seems to be based on the philosophy of uniformity.

In the broader developments of modern social theory outside of the school the principle of individual differences is being more and more

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widely recognized. Industrial society is made up of specialists. Each specialist is dependent on those about him, but finds his personal task congenial because he recognizes the dependence as mutual.

This broad social principle is of cardinal importance in school organization. Sooner or later specialization by the pupil must be recognized as legitimate in the regular work of the school.

The junior high school comes at a period in the child's development when individual differences are becoming sufficiently pronounced to demand attention. The primary child, meeting all the intellectual experiences to which the school introduces him, is submerged by the overwhelming body of new opportunities. There are individual differences in the primary grades, but they require for the most part no separate organizations because the general work of the primary grades is broad enough for all. The children of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades need more individual attention and in the progressive schools are receiving it. Here, however, as in the lower grades, the general organization offers variety

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enough to include the different tastes and capacities without being disrupted. It is only in abnormal cases that organization has to be differentiated in the first six grades.

By the time the pupils reach the end of the sixth year they are so divergent in their attainments and in their outlooks that the organization of the school must reflect this diversity. There must be different paths for the pupils to follow.

This statement has been attacked as undemocratic — as though democracy called for continuous uniformity of treatment of all its members. To this criticism there are two answers. First, individual differences are so marked in the seventh grade that if they are not provided for inside the school, pupils will leave the school. Indeed, pupils are to-day leaving the schools which hold to the old formal curriculum just because they find in industry and in other spheres concessions to their individual needs. Whether we like it or not, education will follow diversified lines from the sixth grade on. How much more rational it will be to adopt a general form of

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school organization which recognizes individual differences and utilizes them.

The second answer is that the plea for instruction in the common elements of democracy can be justly realized only when common elements are treated as part of the program, not as the whole program. There should be common elements in the programs of different pupils, but there should also be elective opportunities. Modern society needs many kinds of workers. Intelligent direction of workers into different fields is a social necessity. The seventh grade is the time when the broader views of life begin to open up before the child. It is time that these views be given all the breadth that training can contribute.

Even while the two answers just offered to the plea for uniformity are partially accepted it is sometimes urged that the period of differentiation of education be postponed. It is said that the high school is the period for such differentiation. To such demands for postponement the answer of experience must be made. The fact is that the great majority of pupils do not postpone the beginnings of specialization of in-

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terests to the high-school period. They sometimes drift blindly because we try to prevent them from seeing whither they are going. Their natures are different. Their attainments are different. Their ambitions are different. They need to see the world in a broad way so that they may take paths that are different. Our educational system must recognize these facts.

Reverting to our historical survey, it is in point to call attention once more to the fact that the *Volksschule* which led us to set up an undifferentiated eight-year elementary school was fixed in its ways because it was an institution designed to produce uniformity of a lower grade. There was and is to-day in the German system differentiation of a very marked type, and it comes long before the end of the eighth school year. From the day school begins the common boy is marked off from the boy going into the higher walks of life. Our American system repudiates the social doctrine which separates the common people from an hereditary aristocracy. Because we want American pupils to have more of a common view of life than the German schools as a whole sup-

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ply, is there any reason why we should be bound by the limiting traditions which keep all the common people of the German eight-year school huddled together in a rigid, meager course?

The junior high school comes with its differentiated opportunities. It offers to pupils the institutional recognition of their individual differences. Its courses of study contain some common elements which will make for a uniform view of democratic responsibilities. At the same time the courses open to one pupil one path; to another, another path.

Another great virtue of the junior high school is that it puts a stop to the waste of time and energy which has resulted from the inadequate organization of our schools. Waste has come from three causes. First, pupils have been held back in the upper grades in order to conform to the tradition that elementary education is vernacular and rudimentary. Second, pupils have been confused because of the great change experienced in passing from elementary classes to high-school classes. Third, many pupils have dropped out of school or failed to work with

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enthusiasm because the subjects offered to them were artificial and unsuited to their needs.

The wastes of our educational system have been accepted with complacency year after year. In the first place, we have been a people living in a rich land where our social inefficiencies have been more than covered up by our material resources. In the second place, we have been utterly unscientific and uncritical in the development of our institutions. We have been a frontier people absorbed in practical adjustments, willing to put up with mistakes, even serious mistakes, if only individual freedom is not cut off entirely.

There have been voices warning us that we cannot afford to go on with our prodigal waste. Twenty or more years ago Eliot called attention to the fact that our pupils are behind those trained in the better European schools. In more recent years our professional schools have become disturbed about this deficiency. Our merchants and manufacturers, made aware of our deficiencies by the competition they have met in the world's markets, have been demanding

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the substitution of vocational training for wasteful general courses.

The demand for economy has become acute in many school systems, often expressing itself in crude terms. Taxpayers have said that they are paying too high a price for an inferior grade of education. Inquiries have been set on foot to discover whether money could be saved or else the schools improved. Experience would seem to justify the statement that communities and individuals are anxious to avoid waste but are not parsimonious in their attitude toward schools. They seem to demand effective expenditures and not curtailment of schools.

The junior high school comes as one answer to this demand for economy. This institution is offered as a better school not as a cheaper school. In point of actual cost the junior high school is usually more expensive than the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades because it offers a richer course of study and especially because it keeps children in school. But in its economy of human beings, the junior high school is far in advance of the old-fashioned elementary school.

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Furthermore, it is an economical school in that it brings its pupils to advanced stages of their training at an earlier date. The boy who is going into commerce can here study the subjects which will fit him for his career earlier than he could in any other organization of the curriculum. The boy who is going into a profession gets an earlier start.

There are some parents who are so enamored of the school which trained them that they are afraid of the new school which carries boys and girls along faster than pupils used to be carried through the elementary school. Such parents go back in imagination to the golden age of their childhood and fabricate notions about the excellence of those earlier schools which have no basis in fact. Tests have been possible through the repetition of examinations given a generation ago; the results of these tests show that the schools of to-day are superior to those of earlier times. Similar tests of pupils who have not been held back by an antiquated and wasteful program show that the junior high school when organized to give enriched opportunities is in most cases a superior school.

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On the part of colleges there is likely to be a lack of disposition to recognize the economies of the junior-high-school organization. The colleges have been accustomed to think of a high school as a four-year institution. The college faculty usually knows that back of the high school there is an elementary school, but a common boast among the members of this body is that they know nothing about the lower schools. If it is proposed that the lower schools be recognized as in any way preparing for college, faculties are likely to refuse to take part in the discussion. Academic myopia will prevent their seeing so far.

To be sure, there are a number of high-school principals who are extracting from the colleges unconscious tribute for the junior high school. Even to-day these principals are reporting to the colleges as high-school credits courses taken in what used to be the eighth grade. Some day colleges will find this out and then some will accept the new thing while others will hold out for a time for what is called the high standard of scholarly work.

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Probably the professional schools will see the economy of the junior high school before the colleges do. Perhaps the economy of the new organization will be compelled to express itself for a few years in plain terms such as the elimination of the eighth grade. In any case, there will doubtless come a time when the richer opportunity and the better articulation of the lower school with the higher will bring economy to the attention even of the most conservative.

There is a somewhat analogous problem of economy at the other end of the high school. There is at that point the so-called junior college. When the two intermediate or junior organizations have been assimilated into the American educational system there is likely to be a general awakening to the fact that economy in education can best be effected by eliminating some of the existing obstructionist institutions. That, however, is another story, the introduction to which is appropriate here only because it helps to make vivid the impression that problems of economy are in the air.

Without the goal of educational economy in

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mind the junior high school will fail of one of its largest contributions. It is perhaps the chief evil of the present chaotic experimentation with the junior high school that the need for economy is not fully recognized. As soon as the idea that there must be economy is accepted, the reform of the curriculum will go forward more rapidly and with clearer conscious motives.

Economy of the true type will be realized only when reform goes deeper than external organization and produces changes in the details of the individual courses. The task before the junior high school is at once a task in the large and a task in the minute. To the administrator and the student of public affairs the junior high school is an institution. To the teacher it is a series of courses, all of which must be worked over in detail.

IX

PRACTICAL METHODS OF PROMOTING REFORM

THERE is no problem more difficult of solution by a democratic community than the problem of putting through a reform. Powerful individuals can work reforms by the exercise of authority or influence because the goal of the proposed reform is clearly seen and the means of reform are energetically used. The fact is that in most cases democratic society depends on strong individuals to initiate and carry out reforms.

How much reforms depend on individuals is not always realized because the immediate instrument of educational reform is often a textbook rather than an explicit declaration of purpose to make a change in the course of study. Again and again in the history of American schools sweeping reforms have been effected by writers of textbooks. Conversely, a book once

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established in the schools is the strongest possible stronghold of conservatism. A successful book will sometimes keep back reform for a generation.

The influence of textbooks is especially strong in American schools for reasons discussed in an earlier chapter. While European teachers give instruction by word of mouth, our schools have developed textbooks to a degree which is astonishing. Our schools always have been and are to-day reading schools, dependent for their operations on textbooks.

With all its influence, the textbook has never been even remotely democratized. Indeed, it is only very recently, and in the clumsiest sort of fashion, that the textbook has been made a matter of public concern. Recently California and Kansas have undertaken to publish their textbooks through State agencies. Many other States and local systems have set up plans of public adoption of books. But even where printing and adoption are public, authorship is individual and the machinery of adoption creaks, to say the least.

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Not only is authorship left to the individual, but the production and distribution of the textbook are left by a public-school system to private commercial enterprise. This is another example justifying the statement with which this chapter began, that democratic society usually leaves its reforms to individuals.

Perhaps it is overbold to hope that it can be otherwise. Certainly the individuals who write American books and the publishers who print and publish them are rendering a service of high quality to the country. The influence of the books used in our schools is for the most part justified by the material supplied to the schools.

When one has a special reform in mind one can hardly fail to think carefully of the effect of the textbook on this reform. In considering the junior high school, accordingly, we may very properly ask, What is to be said of the books?

The answer to be made to this question is that junior-high-school books are few and for the most part of very little help to the movement. The junior high school has been conceived by

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some to be an institution requiring an abridged high-school book; by others, as an institution requiring a somewhat larger collection of books of exactly the same type as has been used up to this time in the upper grades. The fact is that the junior high school needs a new type of book.

It is not difficult to imagine a scheme whereby a new kind of textbooks could be prepared in truly democratic fashion. Perhaps it will not be a vain task to outline the scheme.

Suppose that a number of school systems could be induced to interest themselves in creating a new series of books. These systems are now willing to pay teachers of high ability to teach forty pupils. They are willing to pay teachers to make out reports. Let us assume that twenty systems could be found in the country which would be willing to pay teachers for working out the details of courses of study, or at least to relieve them of part of their other work in order that they might devote energy to the task of making textbooks.

Let us assume further that in the twenty

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systems there are three teachers especially interested in mathematics, three others interested in history, and so on through the list. Let these specialists put their methods and experience into the form of a preliminary statement of a course to be used. Note that the specialists are not to be asked to talk about the course. They are to put down the actual text material.

The next step will be, not an offhand criticism of the material, but a serious trial of the material by the twenty coöperating systems. If democracy cannot collaborate the original text, there is no reason why it should not be trained to serious and constructive criticism. There is plenty of such criticism of textbooks which is lost to-day because we have absolutely no machinery for collecting it. Under the proposed scheme, teachers will be given time for criticizing the text as well as for using it.

At the same time, our twenty coöperating schools will use tests to see how much the pupils who are studying the trial texts really get out of them. Again, we have plenty of tests in schools to-day, but we have no machinery for sending

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back the results of these tests to the makers of textbooks. Our coöperating schools will be concerned with the testing of their courses of study from a new point of view.

It will take time to carry on this testing and to bring together the results. Perhaps some State Department will see the wisdom of doing the work. Perhaps it will be taken up by a National Bureau. We have such a bureau now to standardize cotton and wheat. We have a National Bureau that collects detailed information from the fields where strawberries and cantaloupes are produced. Perhaps it will be thought worth while some day for a democracy to make a course of study for its schools.

After the criticism is in, the preliminary statement will be made over into a book. The book will then be kept in process of periodic revision so that it will never block progress.

The plan is doubtless not so simple as it sounds. It has the advantage over the present plan of textbook-making that it throws the responsibility of this work where it belongs, namely, on the shoulders of the school as an institution.

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Besides improving textbooks such a scheme would lead to a study of reforms as no mere adoption of textbooks ever can. If the schools could be made self-reforming, we might look forward to the supreme achievement of democracy — a school system in which the teachers and the courses of study, as well as the pupils, are in constant process of adaptation to the growing needs of community life.

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